

WHY ARE WE HERE?

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

WHAT'S "HERE"?



Our purpose today is to find out what we know and what we don't know about gangs in Montana.

- Several years ago I was asked to gather anecdotal data to find out what was happening with gangs in Montana.
- I read available literature on gangs so that I didn't sound like a complete idiot and then contacted those individuals who are experienced with gangs in Montana; I call them my "Dream Team."
- Who are they? Jeff Beecroft and Donny Gerhart (GF); Guy Baker (Missoula); Tom Allen (Flathead CO); Dan Hess (State Prison).

What do we know? According to YRBS trend data from 1999-2011 ...

- More kids today are carrying weapons, including guns.
- More kids today are not going to school out of concern for their own safety either at school or on the way to or from school.
- More kids today have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.

A little more history ...

- Gang-free Montana is part of a national program, the National Gang-free Initiative.
- Purpose is to further education, intervention, and prevention of gangs.
- Family-oriented program that intends to foster positive family relationships to keep kids out of gangs.
- MBCC and NWGIA partnered to launch Gang-free Montana in Billings North Park August 28, 2010.
- We partnered again to bring in a trainer from the National Gang Center to provide community assessment training for law enforcement and community stakeholders.
- Law enforcement expressed the need for a statewide task force in order to address the issue consistently; they also need training.

## RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS ...

Review the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model: It is a multifaceted (*prevention, intervention, and suppression*); multilayered (*policymakers and line staff*); multidisciplinary (*justice system agencies, schools, service providers, employers, faith community, government leaders, community representatives*) approach that uses qualitative and quantitative data to thoroughly describe the gang problem for the purpose of reducing or eliminating the gang problem.

Convene a statewide gang task force and let law enforcement tell us what they need from us.

Adapt the model to take a statewide approach and assist targeted communities with the development of their community prevention, intervention, and suppression plan.

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model improves the capacity of the community, its institutions, and organizations to prevent, intervene in, and suppress the gang problem through the targeted application of five interrelated strategies:

1. Suppression
2. Community mobilization
3. Organizational change and development
4. Social intervention
5. Opportunities provision

### Suppression/Social Control

- Goes beyond traditional law enforcement strategies;
- Includes formal and informal social control procedures;
- Close supervision or monitoring of gang youth by all criminal justice agencies and also by community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots groups.

### Community Mobilization

- Involvement of local citizens, community groups, and agencies
  - collective ownership by steering committee
  - community group leaders and residents
  - interagency and community communication

### Organizational Change and Development

- Developing and implementing policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources
  - sharing data and client information across agency boundaries
  - sharing human and other resources
  - accommodating the needs of gang members and their families

### Social Intervention

- A multidisciplinary intervention team is implemented to link youth to social, educational, and employment opportunities
  - utilizes street outreach workers to engage gang youth
  - reduces gang bonds, supports access to needed services, and provides positive adult examples for gang members.

### Opportunities Provision

- Provides a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth

### Who are the key partners?

- Law enforcement
- Probation (juvenile and/or adult)
- Schools
- Social service providers
- Outreach organizations/workers

### What are the partners' responsibilities?

- Provide the necessary data on an ongoing basis
- Serve on the steering committee
- Share power over the assessment, planning, and implementation processes
- Designate staff to serve on the intervention team

### THE COMPREHENSIVE GANG MODEL

- Acknowledge the gang problem and establish a steering committee for oversight and leadership
- Assess the gang problem
- Set goals and objectives
- Convene an intervention team for case management of targeted high-risk youth/gang members (parole, probation, social services, project coordinator, job developer, school, research partner, police, outreach worker)
- Implement an appropriate mix of activities from the five strategies based on the gang problem assessment
- Ongoing data collection to inform implementation and evaluate outcomes

This model works for several reasons: first, time, funding resources and energy are already being directed at gang members – this coordinates the effort; next, the information sharing and organization of efforts increase effectiveness; finally, the efforts are refined and targeted through the assessment.